



News From Congresswoman Hilda L. Solis 31st Congressional District of California

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SOLIS INTRODUCES LEGISLATION TO PROTECT SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA WILDERNESS

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congresswoman Hilda L. Solis (CA-31), a member of the House Resources Committee introduced legislation that would designate many of California's most precious lands and rivers as wilderness or wild and scenic rivers. The "California Wild Heritage Wilderness Act of 2002" (HR 4947) will protect approximately 1.6 million acres of public lands in areas in Southern California.

Proposed lands and rivers to be designated as wilderness areas throughout Southern California include: Silver Mountains, South Fork, and the Kings River. Wilderness designation would protect the ecologically sensitive areas from development and destructive use.

Congresswoman Solis said, "With population growth expected to double in Los Angeles, we have to plan for environmental preservation now so that our natural resources are not destroyed by careless and over-development. During the last 20 years, 675,000 acres of unprotected wilderness – approximately the size of Yosemite National Park – have lost their wilderness character due to activities such as logging and mining. We cannot let the destruction of our most precious resources continue unchecked."

According to the University of Southern California's Sustainable Cities Program, 3 to 4 acres of open space are needed per 1000 people for a healthy environment. In Los Angeles, there is less than ½ acre per 1000 people.

"Our community is concerned about our natural resources. This bill will protect open space and help create a safe haven where people can get away from the city, the smog, the noise, and the daily hazards of urban life to experience nature and enjoy quality time with family and friends," said Congresswoman Solis.

The Wilderness legislation was introduced in the House as two bills - Congresswoman Solis introduced the Southern California wilderness bill (H.R. 4947) and Congressman Mike Thompson (D-CA) introduced the Northern California wilderness bill (H.R. 4948). The Wilderness legislation is the counterpart to Senator Barbara Boxer's (S. 2535) bill in the Senate.

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